Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Multitasking managers: Setting the right example



Being a manager is a demanding job. Meeting organizational goals and resolving unexpected problems while juggling the demands of senior leaders and the needs of the team can mean bouncing from one activity to another and feeling like having achieved very little. Being an effective manager means working smarter – and inspiring your entire team to work smarter.

Setting the example

There are several techniques that may help you better manage your time. Try the following:

- **Apply the 80/20 principle.** The 80/20 principle states that approximately 80 percent of our results come from just 20 percent of our efforts. The key to better utilizing our time – and increasing our effectiveness – is to focus more on the 20 percent of our work that actually produce results. These are likely to be complex, demanding, time-consuming tasks, but they are what should be at the top of our daily to-do list.
- **Schedule meetings in blocks.** Meetings are usually interspersed throughout your day and invariably go over schedule – making it difficult for you to focus on that important 20 percent. If you are calling the meetings, schedule them in blocks so that one begins right after another. This also helps meetings to start and end on time.
- **Schedule specific times to return calls and emails each day.** Use your voicemail to say you will return calls at a certain time or by the end of the business day. This way you won't be constantly interrupted.
- **Schedule quiet time.** You need time to focus on those priority tasks that, as stated, are often complex and challenging. At the same time, you want to have an open door policy for your staff. Let your team know that when your door is closed, you're working on something that requires your full concentration and would appreciate not being interrupted, unless the matter is urgent. Also let people know that when your door is open, they are welcome to bring questions and concerns to you.
- **Delegate.** You'll have more time to concentrate on pressing matters if you delegate certain tasks. You'll also demonstrate that you value people's abilities and are ready to help them develop their skills.

Leading – not just managing

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Great leaders are not only knowledgeable and capable – they're perceived as being fair and trustworthy. They set the standard for others to follow.

- **Be accountable.** Admit when you're wrong and be gracious when proved wrong. Also understand when other people make mistakes. Managers who are more concerned with what is right rather than being right are less likely to have team members who shift blame and hide their errors.

- **Take time to communicate clearly.** You don't want your staff repeatedly asking for clarification or spending hours trying to figure out what you want. Spend a little extra time upfront conveying information and listening to any questions or concerns.
- **Involve staff**. Ask your team for ideas to streamline processes, improve resources and reduce workloads (attending lengthy meetings that do not involve your department). You'll get a better understanding of the challenges staff face while empowering them.

- **Resolve conflicts quickly and effectively**. Conflicts, disagreements and misunderstandings waste time and undermine productivity.

There are many talents, abilities and personality traits that make a great team leader but superior time management skills are perhaps one of the most important. A manager who is able to manage his or her own time – and the time of their teams – gets things done without placing unnecessary pressure on others. That means a more productive, engaged and happier team.